

## Criminals Fear The Bible

A Washington crook who has "been over the road" several times to Trenton and Moundsville, and who declared he is going to reform, was discussing some of the tricks of the trade last night in front of one of the city missions. The conversation finally reverted to the superstitions which are prevalent among thieves and criminals. The Washington man said while he was in prison he had talked with many crooks on this subject, which was, he added, an interesting one to him.

"On my last tour to Trenton," he said to a Star reporter, "I met up with an old fellow who has been in the pro-fess for many moons. From him I got data enough to fill up my 'book' on superstitions connected with the business."

He said many of these beliefs came from England. One of them is that no pickpocket would think of "working" unless he has about his person a charm of some sort. These sometimes consist of a lucky penny, a small stone or some other article which the wearer believes possesses a mystic power against ill-luck. He met a pickpocket at Trenton who carried in his pocket the finger bones of an old woman whose hand was amputated in a railroad accident. The owner of this uncanny charm claimed that he resurrected the hand from the spot where it was buried near a hospital, "in the light of the full moon." When the fellow lost the charm one day he declared misfortune would soon overtake him.

"And it did," said the Washington man, "for in less than a week he was pinched by a New York bull and is now doing a five-year stunt in one of the state pens."

Should a thief be riding in a vehicle of any kind and the horse suddenly slips or stumbles, he regards that as a warning that he must refrain from "work" on that day. Almost all professional thieves regard the Bible with awe. Under ordinary circumstances they will lie with impunity, but they wilt when the Bible is placed in their hand when on the witness stand and resort to all sorts of schemes to evade kissing the holy book. To kiss the Bible and then tell what is false they regard as sure to bring the worst sort

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of ill-luck, which veteran crooks declare will follow the perjurer all the days of his or her life. Therefore to evade kissing the book some of them kiss the thumb that is helping to hold the book instead the actual Bible. They have an utter disregard, it is said, for the practice of affirming by holding up the right hand, which is in vogue in some of the Washington courts, and when a fellow has told a lie to the court after raising his hand he will explain that he has "fanned the judge" or the "wise gazaboo," as his honor is termed.

A policeman is known as "a bull" because for a thief to see a real bull when he is out of a "job" is a sure sign that he will either have an encounter or a foot race with a policeman, a constable or some other officer of the law.

Another omen of evil to a thief is to have a yellow dog bark or snap at him when he is out looking for "work." To have a cat cross his path at night when he is going to perform a job is also considered a sign of bad luck. In the legends of thievery it is related that the noted English highwayman, Claude Duval, came to his death eventually by ignoring the warning given him by a "big black cat with gleaming eyes which crossed his path on the Charing road."

To steal a purse containing foreign money is regarded by the purloiner as certain that before the year is over he will have traveled in strange lands. It is good luck for a pickpocket to find gold in a purse he has stolen from some person at a wedding, while it is equally bad luck to "work" at a funeral.

Funerals and the houses of death are regarded by every class of criminals as tokens of ill-luck. To meet a funeral while going to a "crib" that is to be "cracked" means that death or imprisonment awaits the attempt. Cross-eyed men and women are immune from the attention of the criminal classes. Even a shover of counterfeit money will never attempt to get rid of any of the "queer" by passing it on a cross-eyed man or woman.

All thieves are believers in dreams, but to give their various definitions would be to fill a book as thick as the Bible almost.

The very best dream in the category is said to be one in which the dreamer sees a rainbow. It is related that Chaquetot, a notorious French burglar, while on trial and in the very shadow of the guillotine, the evidence being most damning against him, dreamed in his prison cell of a beautiful iridescent rainbow. From this he deducted that he would be acquitted, and to the surprise of everybody he was. A previously unheard of witness appeared at the trial on the following day—a pretty young woman—and on her testimony the brutal Chaquetot was decreed not guilty.

The worst dream in the Crook's category is that which depicts a darkening storm, accompanied by thunder and vivid lightning flashes. This they regard as a certain sign of death.

One of the luckiest charms to be carried about by a burglar is a wee baby's shoe that is well worn. If the shoe is stolen by the possessor—the charm is said to be more potent. A bullet which has been in actual warfare is another lucky charm. Soon after the war with Spain thieves are said to have paid well for bullets which were carried or found by Uncle Sam's fighting men. A bullet which was extracted from the wounded limb of an American soldier at a hospital was purchased by a noted New York burglar, who is said to have paid a fancy figure for it.—Washington Star.



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### Test of Love

A man is not really in love if he stops to figure out the increased cost of living before making a proposal.—Philadelphia Ledger.

### Good Wishes

The present week The Commoner celebrated its fifth year. Long may it live to educate and uplift humanity.—Lincoln (Neb.) Democrat.